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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 101st Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel)
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDG-AB-BE

24 May 1970

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Feeder Report, Operation Texas Star

Commanding Officer
101st Aviation Group
101st Airborne Division (Ambl)
ATTN: S-3
APO S.F. 96383

1. Name of Operation: Texas Star
2. Dates of Operation: 010001 Apr - 302400 Apr 70.
3. Location: 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) area of operations;
(Maps: Vietnam 1:100,000 Series 1607, Sheets 6342, 6442, 6441, 6341, 6541,
6641, Vietnam 1:50,000 Series 17014, Sheets 6541 II, 6541 III, 6441 III.
4. Command Headquarters: 101st Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel).
5. Reporting Officer: LTC William N. Peachey.
6. Task Organization: The 101st Aviation Battalion with a total authorized
allowance of 75 aircraft was in support of operation Texas Star with the
following units:
 - a. Company A: 20 - UH-1H Lift Helicopters
 - b. Company B: 19 - UH-1H Lift Helicopters
 - c. Company C: 18 - UH-1H Lift Helicopters
 - d. Company D: 11 - AH-1G Cobra Helicopter Gunships
7. Supporting Forces:
 - a. 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion in Combat Operations.
 - b. 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion in Combat Operations.

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EXCLUDED FROM GDS

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- c. 4/77 Aerial Rocket Artillery with pre-strikes on landing ~~scenes~~.
- d. Pathfinders 101st Aviation Group - for the control of pickup zones and landing zones during the staging of combat operations.
- e. 5th Transportation Aircraft Maintenance Battalion with a Direct Support Maintenance facility.
- f. 2/17 Cavalry Squadron with reconnaissance, screening and on specific occasions recovery of downed aircraft and downed aircraft security.
- g. 326th Medical Battalion with medical evacuation helicopters.
- h. U.S. Air Force in combat operations.
- i. Vietnamese Air Force in combat operations.

8. Intelligence:

Enemy activity increased in intensity throughout the area of operations during the month of April. The results of this activity as evidenced by an increase in aircraft shot-at reports, combat damages and losses, is reflected in paragraph 12.

9. Mission:

The primary mission of the 101st Aviation Battalion during operation Texas Star (OPORD 2-70), was to provide tactical mobility for combat troops, supplies and equipment of the 101st Airborne Division during the conduct of combat and airmobile operations. Specifically, primary missions included:

- a. (1). Command & Control console aircraft for battalion commanders and staff officers.
- (2). Armed Helicopter Escort
- (3). Troop Carrier
- (4). Convoy Cover
- (5). Visual Reconnaissance
- (6). Night Hawk System
- (7). Logistical Resupply
- (8). Flare Illumination
- (9). Medical Evacuation
- (10). Psychological Operations-Loudspeaker and leaflet drop missions.

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(11). Chemical Spray-Insecticide and defoliation.

(12). CS Riot Control Agent Drops.

(13). Flame Drops.

(14). Armed Helicopter Close Fire Support.

b. Secondary Missions Include:

(1). Airdraft Maintenance Supply missions for each of the Companies.

(2). VIP Missions and Escorts.

(3). ARVN Support.

10. Concept of Operation:

a. Refer to para 3a, OPLAN 2-70, 291200 March 1970.

b. The 101st Aviation Battalion continues to support the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades with two direct support assault helicopter companies and additional divisional requirements with one general support lift helicopter company. The Battalion Aerial Weapons Company (Co D) supports this Battalion in a general support role daily with three LFT's.

11. Execution:

a. Disposition of Forces: The 101st Aviation Battalion, Headquarters Company along with Company A, Company B, and support units are based at the 101st Airborne Division base, Camp Eagle (YD8016). Company C and Company D are located at the North Phu Bai Sub Base (YD 8813).

b. All aircraft were habitually based with their units. Staging aircraft at other locations for extensive periods of time was not required. The only exception to this was occasional general support requirements for selected classified missions.

c. A 24 hour Battalion Operation center (BOC) was maintained which received all general support missions from the 101st Aviation Group. Missions were allocated to subordinate companies by the Battalion, and performance of all flights were monitored and controlled by the Battalion.

d. Routinely, an assault company ready reaction force (RRF) was on daily standby and had the capability to become airborne and meet a PZ time within 30 minutes after receipt of the mission.

12. Results:

a. It is felt that the desired objectives of operation Texas Star during the period of this report have been met. Through the use of aviation assets the operation has been highly successful. The increased mobility and

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maneuverability afforded to each Infantry Brigade through the use of aviation assets allowed rapid repositioning of combat forces and equipment throughout the AO.

b. Enemy Losses, Categorized as follows:

(1). KIA	0
(2). KBAA	15
(3). KBA	0
(4). Captured	0

c. Friendly Losses:

(1). KIA	1
(2). WIA	3

d. Ground fire incidents by aircraft type and mission:

MISSION	UH-1H	AH-1G
Combat Assault	14	2
CCN	0	0
FOB	0	0
Logistical Resupply	3	0
Other	0	0

e. Aircraft losses by aircraft type and general circumstances:

CIRCUMSTANCE	DAMAGED	DESTROYED	TOTAL
Combat	14	1	15
Non-Combat	7	1	8
Total	21	2	23

f. Statistical data for each type of aircraft.

TYPE A/C	HOURS FLOWN	SORTIES	PAX	CARGO
AH-1G	1034	4332	0	0
UH-1H	4869	12,918	18,337	1227 (Tons)

13. Administration:

a. Unit strength at the beginning of the operation:

	OFF	WO	ENL	TOTAL
HHC	10	6	83	99
Co A	11	21	93	125

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	OFF	WO	ENL	TOTAL
Co B	10	18	136	164
Co C	11	23	95	129
Co D	10	17	116	143
TOTALS	52	85	523	660

b. Unit strength at the end of the operation:

	OFF	WO	ENL	TOTAL
HHC	11	6	80	97
Co A	11	28	102	141
Co B	11	24	107	142
Co C	10	28	100	138
Co D	10	17	121	148
TOTALS	53	103	510	666

14. Logistics:

a. Concept of Support.

(1). External support from DSO 801st Maintenance and 5th Trans Battalion.

(2). Due to the mission of this Battalion, use of forward supply elements is not applicable.

b. Materials and Services:

(1). No problems were encountered in these areas during the reporting period.

(2). Transportation Requirements - N/A

15. Chemical:

a. The utilization of chemicals on specified missions has been used frequently. These missions, under the direct supervision of the Division Chemical Officer and his staff, have included the following types of agents: Flame drops, CS agents and de-foliant.

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(1). Flame drops are accomplished in various ways. One method is to release a drum of napalm from the cargo hook of the UH-1H aircraft. Another method is by utilizing a barrel release device in conjunction with a fuse, released from a CH-47. In the latter case armed helicopters from this battalion provide aerial escort.

(2). CS gas drops are employed from a utility helicopter into designated areas.

(3). Defoliation missions are accomplished by using the spray-bar and tank which have been adapted to the UH-1 series of aircraft.

(4). These chemical missions are employed on a mission basis. Prior clearance is obtained from the ground commanders. The effectiveness of this type of mission is not known at this level of command as no post strike assessments are made.

16. Civil Affairs:

During operation Texas Star, civic action projects were continued by the 101st Aviation Battalion.

a. There has been a weekly medcap mission initiated within the Battalion which has provided medical aid to the local populace.

This mission has been highly successful and is pursued in such a manner as to minimize the development of dependence on US aid and maximize the prestige and effectiveness of the Vietnamese doctors.

b. Company D continues its support of Tou Mou Orphange with limited labor, material and food.

17. Psychological Operations: No Comments

18. Communications: No Comments

19. Engineer: No Comments

20. Artillery: No Comments

21. Army Aviation:

a. Mission: To provide tactical mobility for combat troops, supplies and equipment of the Division during the conduct of combat and airmobile operations.

b. Concept of Operations: The 101st Aviation Battalion remains in direct support of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades. Normally these companies will alternate with the general support company every 45 days. Each direct support company will furnish ten (10) aircraft per day direct support, and will fly logistical missions as required by the Brigade.

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c. Execution: The 101st Aviation Battalion uses as a guide the 101st Aviation Battalion Combat SOP. This SOP standardized all Battalion unit operational procedures and expedites planning, facilitates control, and insures timely, professional execution of airmobile operations. The supporting aviation unit establishes liaison with the supported ground unit as soon as possible after being alerted to a mission. The Airmobile Task Force Commander (AMTFC) and the Air Mission Commander (AMC) will jointly plan the airmobile portions of the operations. The AMC can provide:

- (1). His units current status.
- (2). Assistance in selection of LZ's, PZ's and flight routes.
- (3). His communication capabilities and procedures.
- (4). The current allowable cargo load (ACL).
- (5). Technical assistance in preparation of supplies for internal or sling loading.
- (6). Assistance in computing the best aircraft utilization (how many platoons, companies, etc.)
- (7). The possible effects of adverse weather conditions.
- (8). Assistance in planning for the use of aircraft for missions other than lift (gun support, reconnaissance, radio relay, illumination, medical evacuation).

d. The importance of this liaison early in the planning stages and continuing throughout the conduct of the exercise cannot be over emphasized.

22. Special Equipment and Techniques: No Comments

23. Commanders Analysis:

- (1). a. Item: Selection and improvement of landing zones.
b. Discussion: Serious consideration must be given to the selection and improvement of all hasty landing zones (Ref Appendix III, 101st Airborne Division Regulation 385-1). The failure to properly select or to improve a landing zone after its selection for use, has resulted in instances where the AMC refused some landing zones due to improper size or conditions for helicopter operations. Later investigation and study revealed that many times ground commander's were not attempting to improve the landing zone or pick up zone once they were established in it. This action causes undue hardship on the infantry troops as they are required to move to another LZ and unnecessary blade time is accumulated on the aircraft.
- c. Solution: All ground commanders should be aware of the Division regulation cited in paragraph b above. Additionally when sufficient

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time permits, a joint air reconnaissance should be made by the AMC and AMTF commander to select suitable landing zones.

(2). a. Item: Battalion Mission Effectiveness.

b. Discussion: During the reporting period it was noted that flight crews not aircraft maintenance, proved to be the weak link in meeting mission requirements. The Battalion's subordinate companies averaged approximately fifty (50) hours per day. With the reduced number of aviators assigned, high time and pilot fatigue became critical, requiring constant command supervision. It was clearly evident that in order to sustain the present flying hour rate per company, more emphasis must be placed on assignment and strength of aviators, especially on a long range basis, to provide continuity of experience.

Aviation safety has always been the first consideration and received first priority in the Battalion. Under our present aviator posture, safety is taking second place to the manning of aircraft.

c. Solution: There are two recourse to the problem as discussed, and neither action can be controlled at this level to any degree. (1) Units at a minimum should be maintained at TO&E aviator strength in order to cope with the increase in flying hours. (2). The only other alternative that will allow consideration for aviator safety, and prevent high time is strict compliance to the 140 hour limit placed on pilots for a thirty (30) day consecutive period. This of course would require tailoring mission requirements as necessary to live within the framework of the USARV Regulation. The deletion of many unnecessary administrative flights would eliminate many hours and reduce in proportion the problem area.

24. Recommendation: No Comments.

William N. Peachey
WILLIAM N. PEACHEY
LTC, IN
Commanding

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